

From the Firehouse

By Chief Bill Reed

I would like to take the opportunity in this issue to explore the dangers of hydroplaning and the resulting motor vehicle accidents. Several area roadways pool large amounts of water during heavy rains. These "High Water" areas have and can present a hydroplaning hazard resulting in serious motor vehicle accidents. The definition of "hydroplane" from the Merriam-Webster dictionary is as follows "hydroplane- (intransitive verb): to skim on water; especially of a vehicle: to skid on a wet surface (as pavement) because of a film of water on the surface causes the tires to lose contact with it."

Possible causes listed on the internet at Answers.com include;

1. Driving to fast in the rain.
2. Water too deep on the roadway.
3. Tires too worn out to drive on (no tread wear left).
4. Driving right after a long drought and the water brings oil to the surface of the road causing the road to be slick.
5. Turning your wheel too fast to make a turn in the rain.
6. Improper air pressure in tires.
7. Wrong type of tires on car or truck.

Whatever the cause hydroplaning has caused several serious motor vehicle accidents including fatalities in our area. Please be alert to "High Water" signs, large pools of water on roadways and the condition of your vehicles tires. Hydroplaning hazards increase at night because reduced visibility hides pools of water from view. Please exercise extreme caution on wet roads especially during the heavy periods of rains in the spring and the fall. Please maintain a safe distance from other vehicles especially during periods of inclement weather.

Stay safe. We are pleased to serve you.